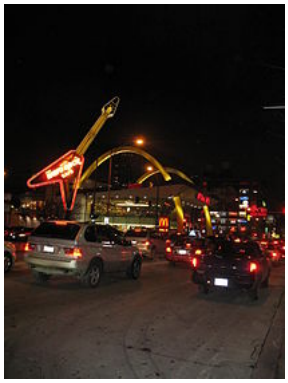
WIKIPEDIA

Coordinates: 41.892800°N 87.631650°W

Rock N Roll McDonald's

The **Rock N Roll McDonald's** (formerly **The Original Rock 'N Roll McDonald's**) was a flagship McDonald's restaurant[1] located in Chicago. It is one of the most famous McDonald's locations in the world and was once the busiest in the United States.[2] Both the 1983 and 2005 structures on the site, located in the River North neighborhood of Chicago, a few city blocks west of the Magnificent Mile, had been tourist attraction since the opening in 1983.[3] The 2018 redesign has no rock 'n' roll theme, but is still the flagship McDonald's location in Chicago.[4] The 2018 redesign won the design excellence Award of Merit from the Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 2019.[5]

During daytime



Westward at night along Ontario Street

After demolition of the original building, a new one opened in 2005 with a maximum occupancy of 300, which is about three times the standard McDonald's patron seating capacity.[6] The original 1983 building and the first design of the rebuilt 2005 structure site held a rock and roll exhibit in a building adjacent to the restaurant and a small upstairs McDonald's museum display. The building featured the first two-lane McDonald's drive-through, relatively luxurious decor, a café, flat panel televisions and a green roof. In 2017, a redesign of the restaurant and adjacent building began to relinquish the Rock N Roll theme.[7] The building was mostly demolished apart from the kitchen; the updated restaurant was designed to be eco-friendly by Ross Barney Architects with interiors by Landini Associates.[8] Even though the re-designed restaurant has no rock ‘n’ roll theming, McDonald's insiders still refer to the location as “the Rock”.[9]

Contents

- Restaurant
  - Museum
- Neighborhood
- Rock and roll exhibit
- Modern structure
- Gallery
- See also
- References
- External links

Restaurant

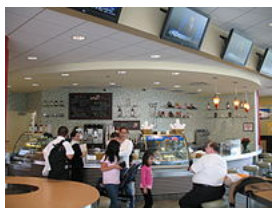
July 2004 (pre-demolition) Left: Northeast view of James Dean, Chuck Berry, et al. Right: Northwest view of Jimi Hendrix, The Supremes, The Beatles, et al.

McDonald's has had a restaurant at 600 N. Clark Street since 1983, though the new building was redeveloped and reopened on April 15, 2005 as a bi-level flagship restaurant/museum with a two lane drive through. This is the first McDonald's location with a two-lane drive-through.[6] The reopening coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Des Plaines, Illinois restaurant which was opened by Ray Kroc on April 15, 1955.[10][11] Rock N Roll McDonald's is the location where the corporation kicked off its celebration of the 50th anniversary of the franchise. Among the celebrities in attendance were Colin Powell and Elton John.[3] At the time of the 2004 demolition, the location was the 3rd busiest in the United States and 12th in the world.[1] In the early 1990s, it had been the busiest in the United States.[2] It was expected to increase its sales revenue rankings from 3rd in the United States and 12th in the world with the renovation and redevelopment.[12]

Modern interior decor with leather chairs and plasma screen televisions as well as trendy Pez dispenser display

The restaurant is priced higher than other Chicago-area McDonald's, in order to subsidize the interior decor which includes numerous plasma display flat screen televisions and expensive Italian lighting. Its second floor includes a coffee bar serving lattes, gelato and biscotti and lounges that pay homage via museum display, music, and decor to every decade the chain has been in business.[13] The 2nd floor McCafé is designed to compete with Starbucks by serving cappuccino, espresso, gelato and Italian pastries.[6] The building features a pair of 60 foot arches and two stories worth of windows that weigh 800 pounds apiece.[14] It has 10 cash register stations to complement its 300 patron capacity, which is about 3 times the normal McDonald's capacity.[6] The restaurant has three front walls of glass.[12]

2nd floor green roof



Upstairs Cafe

2nd floor decor and view

Franchisee Marilyn Wright and her husband Ralph Wright have operated 10 McDonald's locations for the past 12 years.[12] In addition to a perimeter of trees, the building has two green roof gardens on two levels. The lower one is visible from inside.[12] However, the upper roof is only visible from surrounding high-rise buildings. Neither accommodates customer access.[12] The trash cans in this tourist mecca say thank you in ten languages.[6] The restaurant has separate preparation lines for white meat and red meat in the giant kitchen.[6] The demolished building faced Ohio Street, but the new building is rotated 180 degrees to face the Ontario Street tourist pedestrian strip.[6]

The restaurant was sung about by the cult Chicago musician Wesley Willis in a song entitled "Rock N Roll McDonald's", which expresses describes the location as "a good place to listen to the rock music", while also describing the poor health quality of McDonald's hamburgers, particularly citing the high fat content.[15] The song was featured in the movie *Super Size Me*.[16]

Museum

The upstairs museum represents every decade of the franchise.

The south (rear) half of the upstairs portion has a series of displays of early McDonald's photos, multimedia, and paraphernalia including the fast food giant's striped polyester uniforms from the 1960s. Much of it is arranged by decade going back to the mid-1950s when McDonald's first opened and is accompanied by pop culture artifacts such as pet rocks, early cell phones, and 8-track tape players. Downstairs there is a section on the first floor entitled "Chicago Firsts," featuring events and organizations that originated in Chicago.

Neighborhood

The restaurant/museum, its rock and roll exhibit and its parking lot occupy the entire block bounded by West Ontario Street to the north, West Ohio Street to the south, North LaSalle Street to the west and North Clark Street to the east in the River North neighborhood of the Near North Side community area. The building is situated near several other theme restaurants.[14] It is across the street (Clark Street) from the Hard Rock Cafe and the Rainforest Cafe.

Rock and roll exhibit

When the building had its Rock N Roll theme, the display of rock and roll memorabilia focused mainly on Elvis Presley in an exhibit in a separate structure on the same lot. The exhibit included a set of The Beatles statues reminiscent of their *Abbey Road* album cover. In December 2017, the museum underwent a two-fold renovation. It embarked on compliance with a company-wide modernization of stores to include self-order kiosks and table service. Additionally, the museum endeavored to remove its rock n roll nostalgia.[17]

Rock & Roll exhibit

Modern structure

On August 8, 2018, the building opened with 19,000 square feet (1,800 m^2) of space on a single floor, which was 5,000 square feet (460 m^2) smaller than the previous two-floor structure. The building is regarded as the Chicago Flagship of McDonald's and ushers in the pro-green era of McDonald's with over 1000 solar panels, apple trees, arugula, broccoli, kale, and native grasses on the green roof as it seeks Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design platinum status recognition. The exterior eschews emphasis on the corporate red and golden colors and the interior is upgraded for modern commerce: ordering kiosks, table service and use of the mobile app.[4][18] The company had moved its corporate headquarters from Oak Brook to the nearby Fulton-Randolph Market District of the Near West Side in Chicago in June 2018.[4]

Gallery

View from southwest corner of lot near (Ohio Street)

View of rear/south (Ohio Street)

Entrance (Ontario Street) (rock and roll exhibit on right) N.B.: Those are bronze statues, not people in front.

Green roof

See also

- List of music museums

References

1. Chang, Rita (July 12, 2004). "Rock 'n' Roll McD's faces facelift" (https://web.archive.org/web/20060308070747/http://www.chicagobusiness.com/cgi-bin/news.pl?id=13141). *Crain Chicago Business*. Crain Communications, Inc. Archived from the original (http://chicagobusiness.com/cgi-bin/news.pl?id=13141&bt=Rock+and+Roll+McDonald's&arc=n&searchType=all) on March 8, 2006. Retrieved April 30, 2007.
2. Piskorski, Stan (October 1993). "Rockin' the night away". *Sales and Marketing Management*. ProQuest 211833799 (https://search.proquest.com/docview/211833799).
3. Garber, Amy (April 4, 2005). "Golden Arches ready to celebrate Golden Anniversary". *Nation's Restaurant News*. ProQuest 229402398 (https://search.proquest.com/docview/229402398).

4. Kamin, Blair (August 9, 2018). "Column: McDonald's new River North restaurant: Not ketchup-red or mustard-yellow, but green — and not quite cooked" (http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/kamin/ct-biz-flagship-mcdonalds-opens-kamin-0810-story.html). *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved August 10, 2018.
5. Kamin, Blair (October 25, 2019). "Column: Top architecture awards go to riverfront skyscraper, U. of C.'s public policy school and IIT's innovation center" (https://www.chicagotribune.com/columns/blair-kamin/ct-biz-chicago-architecture-awards-kamin-20191026-dnt7y4wsgrfo5lqpbve3oxwrhe-story.html). *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved November 6, 2019.
6. Schmeltzer, John (April 10, 2005). "McDonald's new downtown site gets ready for party; Latest design is a far cry from the modest first restaurant opened by Ray Kroc 50 years ago". *Chicago Tribune*: 1. ProQuest 420306775 (https://search.proquest.com/docview/420306775).
7. Chicago's Rock 'N' Roll McDonald's is Closing to Ditch the Music Theme: Big renovations are coming (https://chicago.eater.com/2017/12/14/16778726/chicago-rock-roll-mcdonalds-closing-remodel) Ashok Selvam, Eater.com, December 14, 2017
8. River North's Rock 'N' Roll McDonald's tapped for futuristic makeover The flagship fast food restaurant will trade its kitschy decor for a modern design (https://chicago.curbed.com/2018/1/30/16950848/rock-n-roll-mcdonalds-restaurant-remodel) Jay Koziarz, Curbed.com, January 30, 2018
9. Former Rock 'n' Roll McDonald's gets new eco-friendly look from riverwalk architect (http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-biz-rock-n-roll-mcdonalds-remodel-20180129-story.html) Greg Trotter, Chicago Tribune, January 30, 2018
10. Nieves, Angel (April 20, 2005). "Rock 'N Roll McDonald's reopens" (http://www.loyolaphoenix.com/2.3233/rock-n-roll-mcdonald-s-reopens-1.336561). The Phoenix. Retrieved January 11, 2007.
11. Becker, Lynn (2006). "Schlock Corridor - Chicago's Rock 'n Roll McDonald's" (http://www.lynnbecker.com/repeat/Schlock/rocknroll.htm). Retrieved January 11, 2007.
12. "Past, Present, Future: Coming together in new flagship's design". *Nation's Restaurant News*. 2005. ProQuest 229314941 (https://search.proquest.com/docview/229314941).
13. "The Original Rock 'N Roll McDonald's" (http://chicago.citysearch.com/profile/41742390/). Citysearch.com. 2006. Retrieved January 11, 2007.
14. "Massive arches". *Chicago Tribune*: 28. February 19, 2005. ProQuest 420294939 (https://search.proquest.com/docview/420294939).
15. "Wesley Willis Biography" (https://web.archive.org/web/20060419030840/http://www.alternativetentacles.com/bandinfo.php?band=wesleywillis). Alternative Tentacles. Archived from the original (http://www.alternativetentacles.com/bandinfo.php?band=wesleywillis) on April 19, 2006. Retrieved August 13, 2009.
16. "Super Size Me [Soundtrack]" (https://www.amazon.com/Super-Size-Me-Various-Artists/dp/B00023P3ZM). Retrieved June 17, 2010.
17. Trotter, Greg (December 15, 2017). "Chicago's Rock 'n' Roll McDonald's to close for remodeling, ditch rock theme" (http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-biz-mcdonalds-rock-n-roll-remodeling-20171214-story.html). *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved December 27, 2017.
18. Hilburg, Jonathan (August 9, 2018). "The Rock 'N' Roll McDonald's replacement opens in Chicago" (https://archpaper.com/2018/08/carol-ross-barneys-mcdonalds-replacement/#gallery-0-slide-0). *The Architecture Newspaper*. Retrieved August 10, 2018.

External links

- Photo archive including the predecessor building (http://www.lynnbecker.com/repeat/Schlock/rocknroll.htm)

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rock_N_Roll_McDonald%27s&oldid=1018399903"

This page was last edited on 17 April 2021, at 22:16 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.